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# THE MESSENGER

Monthly Publication, Swedenborgian Church of North America

January 1996

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## Mountaintop Experience

Deborah Winter

It's a challenge to put some of our most powerful experiences down on paper. Still I'll try. I am a counselor at The House Next Door. I work with the Family Connection Program. I counsel children between the ages of ten and seventeen. I listen to teenagers who have suffered abuse—sexual, physical, mental, emotional. I see the effects of children living in alcoholic homes. I listen hard to the sometimes coded language of a teenager, and try to help make safe an environment in which they might work through whatever it is that is haunting them. I listen to parents share their own past wrongs and unresolved hurts that in some way continue to play out in their own and their children's lives.

I see families work hard to create change from the too familiar ways that have not worked and have created only confusion and pain. I experience the courage of families making changes. It's not about shame or blame which can only create a vicious circle. What it's about is that we're all in this together: this life journey of becoming and feeling our own strength and well-being. I hold on to the sacredness of family and the hope that we can all reach a space of belonging to our own selves as well as each other.

I had first heard of Sergeant Brad Tripp and his wife, Lori, through my co-worker Carol Tanguay. Carol told me how Sergeant Tripp had a dream to help teenagers work through some of their rough patches with the help of one of his gifts—rappelling.<sup>1</sup> Carol had begun to refer some of the teens she was working with to Sergeant Tripp's Mountain Excursions. Carol kept after me—"Come on, you've got to come to the tower and try it." About two months ago I began referring some of the teens I work with, and I felt it important to experience what it was I was sending my kids to.

I have a great fear of heights. Three steps up a ladder and my legs start shaking. I called my friend Julie Lyon\* and asked her to come along.



*That is what this trip was all about—letting go and overcoming some very powerful inner obstacles.*



*Above: Deborah rappelling down the Widow Maker on Mt. Yonah, Helen, Georgia.*

*Above left: Julie Lyon, president of Swedenborg House, poised at the Boulder, one of the rappelling sites on Mt. Yonah.*

Sergeant Tripp has a 46-foot tower in his backyard. He is an expert with all the ropes and safety lines. Even before I was all roped in, I knew I was safe. Still it wasn't easy for me. I was scared all the way through, but I did it and I was sold.

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR, 1996! FROM EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

*Guest Editorial by Wilma Wake*

What if Swedenborg himself were around to wish us a happy new year for 1996? What kinds of things might he include in his New Year's message to our members? We have no way of knowing for sure, of course, but it's fun to guess!

My guess is that he would talk with us about the new year being an opportunity for personal renewal in our lives. He might refer to the following passage that he wrote in the *Arcana*:

*Those who are in faith alone cannot know what makes man new or sanctifies him, still less what made the Lord's Human Divine; for they know nothing of love and charity, and it is love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor that make man new and sanctify him, while the Divine love itself made the Lord Divine. For love is the very being of man, and hence is his living; and it forms man according to an image of itself, just as the soul of man, which is his interior essence, as it were creates or fashions the body into an image of itself. [A 4727, 2]*

Swedenborg might say that he had selected this passage for his New Year's message because of the importance of love for the world of 1996. He would perhaps say that, as he looks around at our world, he is impressed with all the progress we have made, such as greater equality between the genders and greater sensitivity to people of different races, cultures, and abilities. He would be particularly impressed with our technology, such as our word processing software that makes writing so much easier for us than it was for him!

Yet, he might point out how troubled he is by the degree of violence, hatred, intolerance, and the increasing gap between rich and poor in our world. He might say he is worried for the future of the planet given our rate of pollution.

We need to learn to love each other better, he would say. An important part of doing that is loving the Lord. And supporting each other in our love of the Lord and our living a life of charity. So he would encourage us, I think, to use our church community as a place to practice love and charity with each other and to support each other in taking this powerful message into the world.

It would be quite an inspiring message, I think. One that would give each of us renewed excitement for our personal spiritual journey and renewed energy for our journey together as a community. It would leave us with a deeper understanding of charity and an eagerness to share our viewpoint with the world. Actually, I'm not sure we really need a visit from Swedenborg for all that to happen! Let us simply, each of us, decide to renew Swedenborg's teachings in our hearts and lives as we begin 1996!

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## The Messenger

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## Important Church Calendar Dates

January 12-14	FPSRU / AFC—Ft. Myers Beach, Florida
February 16-20	Com ExCom—Newton
March 7-10	SSR Board Retreat
March 17-19	CAM—Newton
March 22-24	GOSU/PMSU/EdSU—Almont, Michigan
May 6-7	Retirement Committee—Newton
June 26-30	Convention 1996—Urbana, Ohio

## President's Activities

July 23—Preached in Fryeburg  
July 30—Preached in Yarmouthport  
August 15—Lectured at Fryeburg Assembly  
August 20—Preached in Fryeburg  
Aug. 20-22—Cabinet at Fryeburg  
Sept. 3—Preached in Fryeburg  
Sept. 10—Preached in Bridgewater  
Sept. 17—Preached in Fryeburg  
Sept. 24—Preached in Fryeburg  
Sept. 28-29—SSR Trustees meeting  
Oct. 21—Temenos Board  
Oct. 29—Preached in Fryeburg  
Nov. 2-4—Wayfarers Chapel Board Meeting  
Nov. 5—Preached in San Diego  
Nov. 12-13—Committee on Admission to the Ministry  
Nov. 15-17—National Council of Churches in Oakland, California  
Nov. 26—Preached in Fryeburg  
Nov. 27—SSR meeting with representatives of Cambridge church.

*The above are President Edwin Capon's activities out of the office from the July convention through the end of November.*

## Mountaintop Experience

(from front cover)

As I write this now, Julie and I are traveling back from Helen, Georgia, in a convoy of all those who went on Sergeant Tripp's latest mountain excursion. Along with twelve teens and several other officers in the U.S. Army Reserves, we traveled 600 miles to rappel off Mount Yonah. We slept outside in a place called the Squirrel's Nest. The location was spectacular.

A good part of the experience is discipline, honor and respect that is taught and modeled. It is not a good idea to step out of line, which can be a temptation for a teen who is acting out from places yet unresolved. Along with the structure and discipline is the guidance toward self-confidence and one's own inner strength.

I can tell you as I rappelled off Mount Yonah I never felt so scared. I truly did not think I would ever be able to finally step off and descend. With each one of us the sergeants encouraged and talked us through our fear. I know they were endlessly patient with me. Sergeant Tripp rappelled right alongside me the first time I went down. His love for what he does was shining through.

While waiting to rappel off the Widow Maker on Mount Yonah (a 260-foot rappel), I remember the feeling of "there's just no way I'm going to have the courage to go off this one." I was talking with Kerri Tanguay, one of the teens on the excursion. I told her I felt far more secure rappelling off the tower in Sergeant Tripp's backyard and that leaning backwards off the mountain just didn't feel natural. Kerri said, "Deborah, the tower is man-made. God made this mountain—what could be more natural?" I felt humbled. What a

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Lori Tripp going Australian (front first) off the Center Site, Mt. Yonah.



Left: Sgt. Tripp going Australian off the tower.

## How the Ropes Work

First of all, a safety seat is put on and tied in a way that is tight and secure. Then you hook onto the safety seat a metal ring called a carabiner. On that an O-ring is hooked into place. Along the top of the mountain, safety ropes are secured and tied among boulders and trees. Sgt. Tripp employs about three times the number of safety measures actually needed.

The main rope is 300 feet long. It is an army rope capable of holding the weight of three army trucks. It goes over the mountain to the bottom, to the person on belay.

A safety line is hooked up to you as you walk down the rock face of the mountain to the rappel spot, so if you should slip, you are secure. Once to the rappel spot, you are hooked up to the main rope and ready to rappel.

Next you place your non-dominant hand on the rope in front as a guide. Then you place your dominant hand behind you on the main rope. With this hand you actually control the speed of your descent by letting go of the rope. If you fasten your grip on the rope, you stop; let go and you rappel down the mountain.

In rappelling, you lean back off the edge of the mountain as if you're leaning back in an easy chair. Then, with your feet actually parallel to you, you push off and out as you go—then back into the mountain, feet in front, push off, let out the rope and rappel.

The person at the bottom is on belay—that person is holding the rope secure. Should anyone slip, or lose their grip, the belay person pulls the rope taut and the person rappelling is held in mid-air, completely secure. It takes only ten percent of the person's body weight to do this. □

**From Deborah's journal notes,  
written about a later trip:**

*"Julie and I are once again in a convoy coming back from the mountain excursion. This time we had 15 teens along with seven sergeants who are in the Army Reserves. This mountain has become a part of me.*

*Weather was cold; we slept again outside in the Squirrel's Nest. . . . lucked out with no rain and the sun shining. The kids did great—it was a good group. Everyone rappelled. Seeing the teens move through their fear, I listened to their learnings of trust, faith, letting go, their pride in themselves.*

*On this trip, after rappelling off Mount Yonah, we traveled three hours further to North Carolina to rappel off the Devil's Courthouse. This is a 6,000-foot mountain with an actual rappel of 30 feet. The sight took my breath away. My goal this time was to just do it—with no delay—once I was hooked up I wanted to let myself go. I said to the sergeant, "Just tell me where to put my feet!" He did, and each time I found myself repeating everything he said. I said, "I'm safe; I can do this." I started down Devil's Courthouse. At the top there is some rock where you can push off for about 50 feet, then it drops completely away on an incline. At that point you can just guide yourself straight down. But Sgt. Tripp was on my belay and he started to swing my rope. I began spinning a bit way up there! This enabled me to push off from the rock several more times and what I felt at that point was joy. I couldn't stop laughing. I got to the bottom of my rappel and looked up. It was truly magnificent. . . ."*

## Mountaintop Experience

*(Continued from page 3)*

response. Another teen, Bobby Vincent, told me that he experienced a sense of trust in himself and in those around him. And yet another teen, Jeri Mormur, told me he prayed before going down the mountain and that he knew God was watching him all the way down.

Once you're all roped in you are safe. As Lori Tripp says, "The rest is up to you, somehow you just have to reach down within yourself and pull up what you need to overcome your fear."

That is what this trip was all about—letting go and overcoming some very powerful inner obstacles. I will never forget some of the looks on the teens' faces after rappelling down Mount Yonah. I would describe it as a look of something gained.

After rappelling, we hiked back up the mountain. We stopped to rest on a sun-warmed rock. I lay back and saw the beauty all around

me, completely unclouded by my previous fear. Had I not rappelled, my day would have been marred by what I had not done, still wishing I had the courage to do it, and still longing to overcome the fear.

Several weeks before, I'd had a session with a 15-year-old girl, deep in her grief saying, "It will never feel different; this pain and sadness will never leave." I thought of her this weekend, sitting on Mount Yonah, watching two hawks circle around. And I understand. A thought comes so strongly to me of the importance to seek out that which strengthens us. It is a good question: Does what I do leave me strengthened or weakened? It takes a lot of work to stay in the woundedness. It's amazing. It wears us out to where we can no longer feel or know our own self; our own needs and wants.

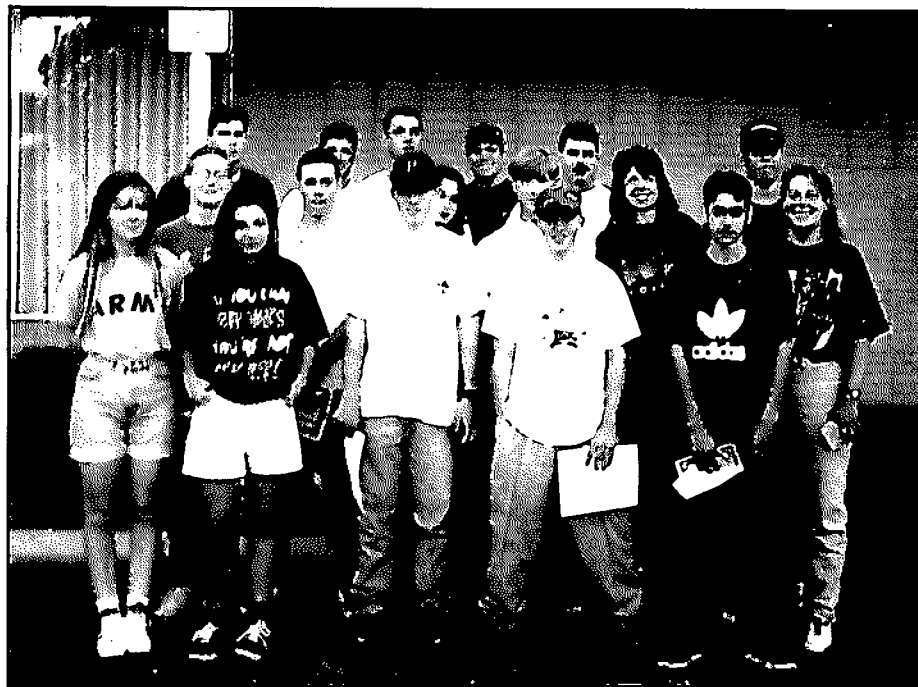
Before rappelling off the mountain the sergeant yells, "On rappel," and the sergeant at the bottom of the mountain yells "On belay."<sup>2</sup>

Right: Sgt. Panaranda talking me through my fears before descending off the Widow Maker.  
Below: The Squirrel's Nest, where we camped.



Everything is secure and ready. It is a symbolic metaphor to me that making a choice to do what is right and following through is like being "on rappel" and the outcome is "on belay," where one's own inner safety lines are secure and ready to meet head on with what is loving and good. Everyone agreed that the first few steps off the mountain were the hardest, but after that we all knew instinctively what to do. It is courageous to move through those fearsome first few steps to what we already know to do.

I will continue to refer the teens I work with to Sergeant Tripp's Mountain Excursions. I will do so with confidence and gratitude for such a wonderful alternative to help our children gain back themselves. □



**Above: The group. Each teen was given a camouflage Bible and a Mountain Climber-Rappeller Certificate of Courage. (Author at far right).**

<sup>1</sup>(In mountaineering) the act or method of moving down a vertical face by means of a double rope secured above and placed around the body and paid out gradually in the descent.

<sup>2</sup>To secure (a person) by one end of a rope.

\*Julie Lyon is president of Swedenborg House Chapel and Growth Center.

*The Rev. Deborah Winter is a full-time family counselor at the House Next Door in DeLand, Florida. She is also involved with ongoing small-group work at the Swedenborg House Chapel and Growth Center in DeLand, and is a member of the Committee on Admission into the Ministry.*



**Julie Lyon climbing the tower. Sgt. Tripp modified the tower to make it more authentic to mountain climbing, covering it with wood and making wooden hand and footholds.**



**Rachel (one of the teens) rappelling off the Boulder.**

*As of this writing, Mountain Excursions has been nominated by the Pentagon for an award of achievement. An update on this development will be published in a future issue of The Messenger.*

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# Where Does Our Love Lie?

*Polly Baxter*

Stewardship is a concept that addresses a number of issues. In churches, stewardship Sundays are usually the time when we learn of the need to increase our giving. At board and committee meetings, stewardship stays constantly at the forefront of discussions to ensure that resources are being managed in the best possible way. For most people, the word brings with it a little shudder. Most of us do not want to think that we are not giving all that we can. Most of us do not want to consider that a project which seems very interesting may not be as cost-efficient as it could be.

Whenever anyone mentions stewardship to me in either context I think of a friend's concept of how the last judgment will be conducted. She is not a Swedenborgian, but I think she has a good grasp of the concept of ruling loves. She maintains that at the time of our arrival into the spiritual world the Lord will ask us to hand over our check registers! Then the Lord will look through them and, by the way we have spent our money (or not spent it), determine what are our highest priorities. If most of the checks are to our favorite department stores and gourmet restaurants, it is time to put on that asbestos suit. If the majority of the checks are for the needs of others, the hereafter climate should be a lot better.

More seriously, I do think that there is legitimacy to the concept that we spend our money where our hearts are. I have completed two annual activities recently that gave rise to the thoughts that I would like to share with you. One of them was the close review of all of the funds that have been bequeathed to the denomination in the past; the other, the close review of the financial statements of the churches that have applied for Augmentation Fund support.

*Have we as a church gotten  
so caught up in existing  
that we have stopped truly  
living as a church?*

In the first case, the review of the bequests, the gifts that so many people made to our church continue to touch me. Some of them were sizable and we tend to remember their names more readily. However, most bequests to the church were from people of modest means, people who left bequests of \$40 to \$2,000 to their denomination and, in many cases, to their local churches. In some cases, there were specific purposes attached to the gifts; in others, they were for general purposes. This trend

seems to have stopped in the early 1960s. Economically, there does not seem to be a reason for this change, and it makes me wonder what has changed within us and within the church to bring such a practice to a close.

Then, when I review the financial statements submitted with Augmentation Fund requests, I notice that there are very few churches applying for aid that have significant funds invested to generate income. I cannot determine by the forms whether this is because no one has made gifts of funds to the church or if the funds given were used to take care of immediate needs rather than future needs. This lack of invested funds means that the churches are entirely dependent on current congregational giving and on the denomination for their continued existence. Unfortunately, the level of congregational giving in these churches and across our denomination as a whole is low. It is improving but there is still a lot of room for increase.

Non-standard giving practices may be part of our historical perspective. I have heard of churches within our denomination that did not take a worship offering at all in earlier days. The treasurer would simply contact people and let them know that there were unpaid bills and money would magically appear! In others, the offering at the worship service was taken almost secretly in little velvet bags rather than on an offering plate. This was to protect people from embarrassment or the sin of pride. In many cases, the church was supported by a few moneyed individuals rather than by the congregation as a whole. I do not think that this has been good for us because we have not really developed a good habit of giving. According to the Augmentation Forms, many of us would appear to spend more at fast food restaurants for one meal than we give to the church on a weekly basis.

This has gotten us into a position that is unique, to my knowledge, among denominations. In most churches, funds come from the local churches to the national church to support various projects—missions, educational efforts such as church camps, special ministries, publications, etc. In our denomination, the national church not only funds the projects with little current giving from members but also sends money to many of the churches so they can pay salaries to their ministers.

Getting back to the original concept of our money going where our hearts are, I am concerned that some of the things mentioned indicate that our hearts are not truly with the church, either nationally or locally. I am hoping that this is just an appearance and that there is something that we can do immediately to rectify this. My largest concern is that truly correcting our stewardship as a denomination cannot be accomplished simply by writing a check. This will definitely help the symptoms and is a necessity. But to me, truly correcting the situation is a matter of

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## On Meditation

George Dole

As part of the interest in Eastern religions that has sprung up over the last few decades, more and more people have found some particular discipline of meditation to be rewarding. For some, it becomes the touchstone of spirituality, and it is easy to understand why the experience of the transcendent, or the encounter with the Divine, might be thought to be the ultimate goal of religion.

However, it has also been noted that something is missing when a guru whose enlightenment is beyond question is found to have had sexual relations with trusting disciples, as has sometimes been the case. In reading about this recently, a passage from *Divine Love and Wisdom* (n. 258) came to mind with a new relevance.

By birth, we are all gifted with the ability to discern what is true even to that deepest level where angels of the third heaven are. . . . If the love of our volition is not raised at the same time, then no matter how high our mind's wisdom may rise, it eventually falls back to the level of its love.

Swedenborg has been rated as one of the most intelligent people who ever lived, and we know of no one who had more experience of the realms of the spirit. Time after time, though, he points us away from any search for transcendent states of consciousness and toward "love of the neighbor," which we might well translate into modern terms as "sensitivity to each other." The foundations of a spiritual life are laid not by our prayer life so much as by our "moral and civic" life (*Divine Providence* 322).

In their ground-breaking *Heaven: A History*, Colleen McDannel and Bernhard Lang credit Swedenborg with introducing "the modern heaven." They go on to explain that the predominant concept of heaven, before Swedenborg, held that the essence of heaven was the "beatific vision,"—being totally caught up in wonder and awe at the glory and majesty of the Divine. When we contrast this with the heaven we find in *Heaven and Hell*, it is as though the traditional view believed that the first great commandment canceled the second, as though to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and strength left no room for us to love our neighbor as ourselves. For Swedenborg, heaven is first and foremost a community, and we are designed and built for societal relationships.

In rescuing the dimension of social responsibility, though, Swedenborg did not lose sight of the vertical dimension. "No one can look at the morality of the outer person and draw a conclusion about the morality of the inner person" (*True Christian Religion*, n 433<sup>3</sup>). Rather, he said, "Live out these moral and civil laws not only as moral and civil laws but also as Divine laws, and you will be a spiritual individual" (*Divine Providence* 322<sup>2</sup>).

In short, if meditation does bring enlightenment,

enlightenment brings with it responsibility. "If you were blind, then you would have no sin. But now you claim to see . . ." (John 9:41).

*The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole is professor of Bible, Languages and Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion.*

## Where Does Our Love Lie?

(Continued from page 6)

taking stock—as individuals, congregations and denomination—of where our love lies and acting appropriately with our decisions as well as with our money. Does our love lie in continuing the practices of which we have grown fond? Does it lie with abandoning them and adopting new forms and expressions of ministry? Is it consistent with a combination of both? Have we as a church gotten so caught up in existing that we have stopped truly living as a church? Has the excitement of our faith diminished? There are a lot of hard questions that we need to face on all levels. Many churches are at their healthiest when they are facing a crisis. This may be the time for us.

It definitely is a time for us to start developing the giving habit. We are making headway. The Common Assessment Forms each year show a rise in the rate of giving. The Annual Appeal is having a good response this year from all segments of our denomination. The situation is really not as dark as the foregoing may have made it appear. Light is starting to break through the clouds.

A gift given in love brings much more pleasure to the giver than to the recipient. A gift given in true generosity is an expression of love. Too often people confuse being generous with making large gifts. Generous does not mean lavish. It means open-handed, free, high-minded and noble.

As we travel the road of regeneration, generosity of spirit would be one of the traits that we should seek to develop. This is not just generosity in giving, although that is a part of it. It is generosity in everything we do. It includes giving others the benefit of the doubt when it would be possible to attribute negative qualities to them. It includes opening ourselves to new ideas and finding new ways of looking at things. With this type of generosity, life becomes more expansive and more exciting. A church filled with generous people not only prospers financially, it grows.

*Polly Baxter is chair of the Augmentation Fund Committee, and also serves on the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU) and the Investment Committee. She is a member of the Washington, D.C. Swedenborgian Church (the National Church).*

"Where Does Our Love Lie?" is the third and concluding *Messenger* article on stewardship. We invite *Messenger* readers to send in your views on this issue or your comments on the ideas presented by Eric Allison (November), Paul Martin (December) and Polly Baxter.



# Meditation & Chemicalization

Steve Newby

**K**en Wilber, one of the leading teachers in the transpersonal (consciousness) field of study makes this startling revelation. "Meditation is not a way to make things easier; it's a way to make them worse, so you will have to grow in the process. . . . All of this is just barely balanced by an equal growth in equanimity, compassion, understanding, awareness, and sensitivity, which makes the whole endeavor worthwhile."

In a broad sense, Mr. Wilber is right! I do not agree with everything he says about meditation but I do agree that sometimes meditation does facilitate rapid spiritual growth that can lead to constructive pain and positive changes in consciousness. Even though I teach the value of meditation and say that it is the fastest and safest route to enlightenment, the statement may be just a tad misleading. I would now like to amend and clarify that viewpoint somewhat. Meditation is not always a picnic.

Sometimes it can start a panic but the panic can

lead to a great and wonderful soul promotion. Meditation's greatest danger is to our egos. It may wake us up spiritually and this awakening can prove to be very painful at times—a seeming nightmare. But awakening from a nightmare is often a freeing experience.

A beginning meditator often first experiences an influx of uncontrolled and uncomfortable thoughts and memories. This can be somewhat disturbing but is usually not too difficult to deal with as one develops a passive witnessing awareness. After

watching and letting go of all that chaotic mental flux one begins to feel a peacefulness that is very pleasant and deeply restful. This is the peace that passes understanding and it has wonderful healing benefits. So far so good. It is usually *after* the meditative experience, during your daily activities, that the growth challenges begin, often when you least expect it—like a thief in the night.

Meditation will soon bring forth revealing dreams and insights into your human problems. Instead of your problems being unconscious they are now shown to you in the clear light of spiritual awareness. Meditation has made you more sensitive and aware and now you can't unconsciously hide from the pain anymore. Your divine discontent grows with every revelation of egocentricity. The great Unity teacher, Emilie Cady, called this state of awareness "chemicalization," her term for consciousness in the tur-

you've carried around for so long? With a herculian effort you figure out what it takes to unburden yourself and you drop the weight. (It is often the act of forgiveness that lets go of the extra weight). You are now a much freer person but only awareness of the painful burden could free you from it.

As you continue to meditate and grow in awareness and spiritual sensitivity, more and more burdens are brought to light. Every burden becomes consciously painful and must be dropped. Let's think of our burdens as a wardrobe problem. The ugly iron vest of resentment around your chest has prevented you from breathing and now it must be removed and replaced by an extra large T-shirt of love and forgiveness. The pain ends and deep breathing begins. The cruel pinching shoes of misunderstanding hurt so much that they must be removed and replaced with a roomy pair of understanding sandals. The tight little ego cap of

personality has given you such a migraine headache that you

decide to replace it with a ten gallon hat of spiritual individuality. That restricting belt of fear and doubt around your gut is about to cut you in two so you take it off and wear some uplifting positive suspenders instead—what freedom! Meditation helps you to grow out of the old clothes and into the new.

Mr. Wilber suggests that meditation is not the panacea of all ills. Well, paradoxically, it isn't and it is. Without meditation we would not wake up and do something about the pain. What we do about the

**MEDITATION'S GREATEST DANGER IS TO OUR EGOS.**

moil of transformation. For example: Suppose you have unconsciously carried around a two-hundred-pound knapsack all your adult life. The extra weight caused you no undue concern but you did feel tired all the time. Suddenly someone points out to you that the extra weight you are carrying need not be carried; you would be much better off without it. Because of meditation, you now feel the pain of the extra burden and it hurts! You may even agonize whether to drop the extra weight or not. How do you drop something



pain is the next question we have to answer. Many problems that are revealed through meditation must be approached and healed through the avenues of psychotherapy, medical science and physical exercise in conjunction with further meditation and affirmative prayer. Sometimes good therapists, spiritual counselors, or other helping professionals are worth the investment, especially if they understand the power of holding ideas in consciousness (belief). We

must find whatever avenues serve best to foster emotional release, forgiveness and high self-esteem in us.

So, should you meditate even if it causes you pain? Yes! Ken Wilber confides that meditation "is a direct way to engage your own growth and evolution, and, as is always the case, growth is painful" . . . but "there are extraordinary benefits and extraordinary pains, so hang in there." To paraphrase the wisdom of the great mythologist Joseph Campbell, who

speaks to the hero within us all, "Say yes to life, with all its painful burdens, and life will say yes to you." Go for the abundant life! Exercise those spiritual muscles! Meditate, renew your mind, and transform into the perfect spiritual being you already are.

*The Rev. Steve Newby is a spiritual educator and former minister of the Unity Church of Peace in South Bend, Indiana.*

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## Thoughts on the New Year

# Beginnings and Endings a matter of perspective

Steve Pulis

A time of beginnings and endings: it seems to be a matter of perspective, doesn't it? Do you see life as constant endings, constant beginnings—or both?

The truth is they are inseparable. You can't have one without the other. And sometimes life can be very discouraging or disappointing if we choose to see only one aspect of the whole picture. I am reminded of the parable of Jesus as He spoke of needing to lose one's life in order to find life, that the kernel of wheat seed must die for it to produce many seeds.

We live in something called the present that lies between the future and the past—like a stream flowing through us and around us. The old "can't put your foot in the same river twice" idea.

That alone can be a frightening concept if you stop and think about it. Every cell in our bodies is changing moment by moment; people come and go; the things we own rust, fade, rot and wear out; fortunes rise and fall; jobs disappear as new ones are created. Actually one of the

most dangerous things you can do these days is to stop changing or be unable to adapt to change.

But that's just one view—everything is changing. Without the other view, life can seem pretty darn lonely and uncertain. The other view sees something quite different—there is a constant in life wherever you look. Swedenborg called that constant Divine Love and Wisdom some 200 years ago. The idea that within everything exists first the desire for it to be—love. And without it nothing could exist. Put another way, the constant in life is unconditional love. No matter what happens we are loved. The drifting sands of change give us life. But their source comes from something unchangeable.

May we, as we enter yet another unpredictable year, be reminded to see both views of this gift called life and rest equally secure in its certainties.

*The Rev. Steve Pulis is minister to the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound in Redmond, Washington.*

Reprinted from their church newsletter, *Connections*, January 1995.

Steve Ellis

. . . Often when we begin a new year, I think about our Jewish friends, who celebrate their new year, Rosh Hashanah, in September. They start their new year with a period of introspection and penitence that emphasizes human freedom and individual responsibility. This is done not to conjure up excessive guilt or condemnation, but to provide a time of opportunity and insight into the struggle of everyday existence.

The new year with its message of hope and renewal can be an opportunity to find meaning in spite of life's frailties and the harsh reality of human existence. Its theme of freedom with responsibility and capacity for change (repentance) can be for all of us an open door inviting us to a more joyous celebration of life and refreshing walk with God. Perhaps as we come to understand more fully the reality of its message, we can experience how truly God is there in all the events of our lives, in all our coming and going from this time forth and forever. . . .

*The Rev. Steve Ellis is pastor of the Boston Swedenborgian Church.*



## Suspending Assumptions

Eli Dale

Here is a new idea I'm trying to practice, the valuable tool of "suspending assumptions." It supports both Steps 1 and 2 of Regeneration, which are (1) identifying what we're ready to let go of and what we're ready to pick up, and (2) practicing new behaviors to do so.

What is an assumption? It's an idea we hold that is so obvious we don't even bother to speak it, like: everyone knows the world is flat. Assumptions we hold within our church community might be: the minister is in charge of everything, bureaucracy is unspiritual, a dollar or two in the plate is enough, no one called me when I was away for three weeks so no one missed me. . ."

Suspending assumptions does not mean that we should remove assumptions from our minds by putting them into suspended animation. It means letting them "hang out" in front of our faces for all—including ourselves—to see. Until you say, "I am operating with an assumption that the world is flat," you probably wouldn't even think to wonder about it. It helps others see our point of view and how we got it. And you provide the opportunity to discover if other people have the same assumption or a different one. Suspending assumptions allows us to retain and express our opinions but keeps everyone cognizant that we are talking about opinions. It also helps us determine if we want to keep them, if they have continued validity.

This trick, of course, requires two things: (1) we must be able to identify our assumptions and (2) we must not be defensive about them. *Suspending* assumptions is difficult. I am starting with "checking out" assumptions. It usually takes me several days to recognize that I am operating on an assumption, that I have leapt to a conclusion. Then I try to screw up enough courage to go

to someone else, preferably a person directly involved in my leap, and ask for a reality check. I have to be willing to expose my assumption for what it is, show it to someone else, and then listen openly to information that could shatter my world view—or a piece of it, anyway. Problems arise when I am so attached to my assumption that I won't hang it out for all to see. When my sense of place or sense of rightness in the world is dependent on an assumption, I'm not as likely to risk "suspending" it. There is scientific evidence the world is spherical, you say? This can be very cleansing, but it's scary.

Regeneration begins with self-examination: what am I doing/being and am I OK with that? (Or more scary: Do I imagine God is OK with it?) I can keep myself from ever getting to Step 1, either by failing to see my assumptions and how they influence how I experience the world, or by mistaking my assumptions for Truth.

For instance, for most of my life I assumed that if I was going to paint something blue and you asked, "Are you going to paint that blue?" you would not be seeking information about painting or color choices but would be telling me, in a sidelong way, that my decision to paint it blue was wrong. (In my family of origin, this would have been a safe assumption.) So I would respond, "Do you think another color would be better? Or maybe I should just throw it away"—under a second assumption that everyone else has better ideas than I do. You would not get information about my painting plans and I would be left having a shame attack about my painting plans. For a long time, I didn't even know I held these assumptions; I just reacted. Having finally figured out that I filter my experience of the

world through the assumptions, *questions are criticisms* and, *your ideas have more value than mine*, I can now decide to discard those assumptions, and that changes me. I am more able now to give a straight answer to a question, rather than to the criticism I imagine. If you really want to offer criticism, you'll have to tell me plainly.

I would welcome playmates for these exercises. Even when it's scary or painful, I think it's fun, in the spirit of discovery, to see what assumptions are "holding up" my personal process. Whether "holding up" means "delaying" or "supporting" will be revealed. You have my permission at any time to ask me or tell me about my assumptions. Let me know if I can do the same for you.

Sometimes it takes more learning after an assumption is revealed to begin Step 1. One assumption turns out to be a part of a whole network (or rat's nest). Often I feel that Swedenborg presents Step 1 of Regeneration as though it could be done in an hour of contemplation. (Maybe for him it could). My experience has been that it is more like making a stone sculpture, chipping away at tiny little pieces of the rock of my mentality to reveal, slowly, the new form that exists only in potential within. I may have to expose many assumptions before I can begin to see a vision of what I could call into my life. I've been bumping into assumptions about security and money, ability and gender, needs and miracles, love and possessiveness. And I see that they intertwine. When my chisel finally strikes the right place, I hope I have my hard hat on, because there will be quite a rock slide when all these assumptions fall away. But what clarity must lie within!

*Eli Dale is president of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church. Reprinted from their September and October 1993 Swedenborgian Church Newsletter.*

Ms. Dale credits Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* for the growth concepts presented in "Suspending Assumptions" as well as her article, "Personal Mastery," which appeared in the November 1993 *Messenger*.

## Our Swedenborgian Heritage

Twenty-second in a Series

### Swedenborg and Artificial Language

Louise Woofenden

When you were a child, you may have used pig latin or made up a code so that you could talk secretly to your friends.

In 1887 a book appeared, *Lingvo Internacia*, intended for the opposite purpose. Its author, Dr. Ludwik Zamenhof (1859-1917), a Polish Jew, was from a Russian-speaking family who lived on the Polish-Russian border, in an environment of racial and national bigotry. A practicing oculist, Zamenhof invented an artificial language easy to learn for people of many nationalities. His system did away with gender, made spelling strictly phonetic, and standardized plurals. The vocabulary was drawn from a very small number of roots, mostly Romanic with some Germanic and Slavic ones. All nouns ended in "o," all adjectives in "a," all adverbs in "e," all verbs in "i." All plurals were indicated by a final "j." Many composite words were formed by joining two simple roots: Father was "patro," the feminine ending was "ino," and therefore "patrino" meant "mother." "Granda," "big," joined to "mal," which meant "not" (the opposite of the word used), meant "little"—"malgranda (not big) birdo," little bird, "malgrandaj birdoj," little birds.

Zamenhof used the pseudonym "Dr. Esperanto," "one who hopes," to express his wish that the new language would promote better relationships among nationalities, as well as make good literature available to people of varying educational levels. He translated Schiller, some Shakespeare, Anderson's fairy tales, plays of Goethe, Moliere and Gogol, and all of the Old Testament into his new tongue, which his followers soon began to call Esperanto.

An international magazine was begun, and Esperanto clubs were organized, the first one being in Keighley, England (where there is still a society of the New Church). The American Esperantist Society was founded in Boston in 1905 joining 49 national and 22 international groups. About 100,000 people could speak Esperanto.

Some in the New Church saw Esperanto as a way of spreading the teachings of Swedenborg. A report from the 1909 Convention in Brockton gives a picture of a well-planned and unusual presentation which took place in the sanctuary of the church and was attended by approximately 100 people.

Hanging from the chandelier at the front of the room was a large green star, Esperanto's emblem, "La verda stelo." The Rev. Paul Sperry opened the meeting by reading the first psalm from the "Psalmaro." The president of the Brockton society, Fred R. French, gave a history of the "Kara Lingoo." He pleaded for the recognition of Esperanto as a powerful tool in missionary work.

Then the Rev. A.B. Francisco arose. A pioneer in the movement, and a zealous worker among Spanish-speaking people in the Southwest, he had studied Esperanto for a long time. His talk was mostly in that language, but, the report states, "so clear was his pronunciation and so exact his inflection that much of his address was understood by those entirely ignorant of the language."

To close the program, the church quartet sang "Malnova Tempo" ("Auld Lang Syne").

All people interested in organizing a New Church Esperanto Society were invited to stay. Twelve signed the roll, and elected as officers Mr. French, president; the Rev. J. B.

Spiers, of Richmond, Virginia, vice-president; Carrie Sproat, of Chillicothe, Ohio, recording secretary and treasurer; and Alice M. Field, of Brockton, corresponding secretary. The meeting expressed the intention of requesting recognition as an affiliated body of the denomination. Reports were given of people led to the New Church through Esperanto tracts.

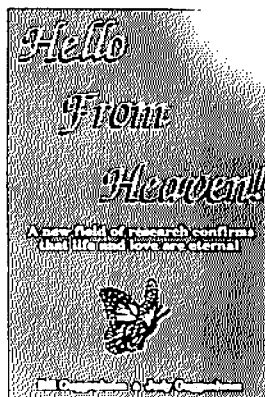
Fred French reported in the June 30, 1909, *Messenger*, "There is at present a dearth of Esperanto literature. Has not the New Church something to give the hungry reader? . . . Almost everyone studying the new language becomes an enthusiast, and especially so with the New Church Esperantist. The eye of the student sees ahead broad fields for missionary work. Esperanto is the medium."

In the November 3, 1909, *Messenger* we learn that one interested reader had been reached in Mexico. The second annual meeting, in 1910, reported "many New-Church tracts" in Esperanto, and three new members. Since the Sixth International Esperanto Congress was to be held that August in Washington, D.C., General Convention set up a committee to plan an Esperanto worship service in the National Church during the time of the Congress. Alas, the committee decided that a service could not be held without an Esperanto choir, and since they could not afford one (or even a printed program), the plan was dropped. Only one New Church person, J. B. Spiers, attended the Congress.

Did the New Church Esperanto Society continue? The *Messengers* and church *Journals* for years immediately following have no further mention of this unusual idea for outreach.

*Louise Woofenden is a writer and former archivist at the Swedenborg School of Religion. She lives in Sharon, Mass.*

## Book Review



### *Hello from Heaven!*

by Bill Guggenheim and  
Judy Guggenheim, 1995

The ADC Project,  
P.O. Box 916670,  
Longwood, FL 32791  
368 pages, deluxe softcover edition  
\$14.95 plus \$2.50 shipping  
Available by mail only  
(BookCrafters: 800-879-4214)

In the July 1992 *Messenger*, an announcement by a team of researchers, Bill and Judy Guggenheim, caught my attention. They were in search of accounts of ADCs (after-death communications). During the preceding decade there had been much publicity and research of NDEs (near-death experiences). By and large this had become an accepted cultural phenomenon. Bill and Judy wanted to explore the next logically sequential step. Namely, if consciousness continues, can "Life after Death" be verified? Does communication occur between those who made their transition and loved ones they parted from? If so, what form does it take?

Since this subject is of great interest to me personally, I talked with the Guggenheims regarding their research format and was impressed by their strict guidelines. Their research parameter called for communication that had been spontaneous and direct (without intermediaries), and had to have meaningful content for the receiver. It had to be appropriately timed and the content verifiable, if possible. To be included in their study, the person claiming

to have received such a communication from the other side could not have been under the influence of mind-altering substances.

Considering all of the above, I felt we had a family anecdote that would fit their research criteria. My sister, Kay Peterson, had died of cancer in 1991 leaving a bereft family behind. About three months after she had made her transition, my nephew Mike's birthday was approaching. He had recently graduated from college and was living in the town where he had gone to school, a state away. My mother (his grandmother) insisted on making a birthday package for him with his favorite cake and cookies—as his mother would have done. It was late at night when she finished with the baking and wrapping and she was exhausted. Too tired to go to bed, she lay down on the living room couch and fell into a deep sleep. She awoke suddenly to a brightly lit room with my sister bending over her. Mother states, "She was beautiful! There was such a radiance coming from her face and upper body, with light all around her. And she said to me 'Thank you, Mutti, (that's what we affectionately called our mother) for remembering my children!' Then she gradually faded from view, but the light which had surrounded her remained near the ceiling for a long time and lit up the living room. I was awed and very comforted by the experience. It was wonderfully real and deeply moving. Kay seemed even more alive than when she was with us. Imagine, she knew I made a package for Mike!" Mother's experience of my sister's visit made a deep and lasting impact. It communicated to her that there was joy, love, and life more abundant to which Kay had access now.

Although this is a treasured "family heirloom" to us, the Guggenheims declined the anecdote for inclusion in their research study because they did not take third-party accounts. To me, this spoke highly for the credibility of their work. They were not interested in "hearsay," only in authentic first-person accounts and my mother wasn't up

to talking about it to strangers at the time.

*Hello from Heaven* is to my knowledge the first study published from a new field of research called "After-Death Communications" or ADCs. This book is the result of seven years of searching for ADCs. From an astounding number of 3300 firsthand accounts compiled which did meet their criteria, 353 were selected for this book, grouped into 12 categories. The anecdotes come from people of all ages, believers and former non-believers in the continuity of life. No, it is not a double blind study. It is a collection of uplifting, joyous, food-for-thought anecdotes from people all over the US and Canada, who believe that their deceased family members (from babies to people who died in their 90s) or friends have reached out to them in love, delivered a highly personal, often urgent message, which was received and made a deep impact on the person for whom it was intended.

*Messenger* readers will find some interesting correlations here to the writings of Swedenborg. For instance, in *Hello from Heaven* not all messages come from the same stratum of heaven. Some regions seem to be far brighter than others. Children appear to be tenderly cared for and mature quicker than their chronological age would warrant. The deceased loved ones are immediately recognizable, but they appear healthy, usually younger, and often wiser than remembered.

We are asked by the authors to read the accounts in this book "with the eyes of your heart and listen to them with the ears of your soul" and determine for ourselves whether these ADCs are genuine.

—Reviewed by Ann Graber  
Westermann

*Ann Graber Westermann, M.Div., Logotherapy Consultant and Educator, has had a lifelong predilection for things of a spiritual nature. She was instrumental in initiating the Kay Peterson Memorial Garden—in honor of her sister—at the Church of the Open Word (Swedenborgian), St. Louis, Missouri.*

## Opinion

In this section of *The Messenger* we are pleased to present the varied views of our readers. Letters published here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Communications Support Unit or the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church. Published letters may be edited for brevity and clarity.

When you see an opinion with which you agree or disagree, please send your own views to the Editor so that *The Messenger* can be a forum for individual viewpoints. We welcome letters on all pertinent topics.

To the Editor:

Reading the Rev. Eric Allison's report on church growth in the October *Messenger*, I was surprised to learn the "good" news that only two churches (down from nine just five years ago) currently use the First Order of Worship and that more and more guitars and contemporary music are played during Sunday services.

I object. San Francisco, my parish, is one of the two implicitly recalcitrant congregations which stubbornly cling to the First Order of Worship. Yet we are growing by leaps and bounds. Has any other parish grown as much? I would be interested in seeing the statistics (including total denominational membership this time) reprinted but

with San Francisco factored out. According to this year's *Journal*, denominational membership has declined again in the last year.

As it is often stated that numerical growth is our growth and outreach priority and that our very survival depends on it, I think it's time to take a hard look at the numbers without blaming the use of the First Order of Worship for our woes.

Based upon our goal of numerical growth and the numbers, it is time to honestly admit that the church's growth and outreach efforts have been expensive failures. I take no comfort in learning that we are spending \$70,000 more per year now on advertising and outreach than five years ago. This is an increase of 26% at a time when many line items have been reduced or eliminated because of a denominational deficit of well under the \$70,000 mark. We have little to show for the money. Total membership is down, as are adult Sunday school and teen attendance. Only total church attendance is up a bit—and that's with "old-fashioned" San Francisco included.

Let's get out of denial: if the church would repent (turn around, literally), it could regenerate! Our church is not predestined to extinction. There are some bright spots.

But we can do *much* better. I could write a treatise on how I think the church could grow. I'm not a defeatist as, in San Francisco, there's no defeat! For the moment, I just wish to caution against confusing our personal preferences and predilections with objective reality as measured numerically.

Be assured that I do not think the First Order of Worship is the only "correct" form of worship. We are a diverse lot, using a variety of approaches with varying degrees of success. I, myself, am also intimately involved with Living Waters HIV Ministry and love the Duviviers' Chrysalis Center in France (which does not receive any monies from General Convention, yet is successful).

If you wish to listen to guitars and explore new liturgies, so be it. As for me, I prefer the lofty and dignified First Order of Worship—amidst our thronging crowd. I invite you to our stodgy, conservative city to experience our growing church. But please, do arrive early, lest you not find a seat.

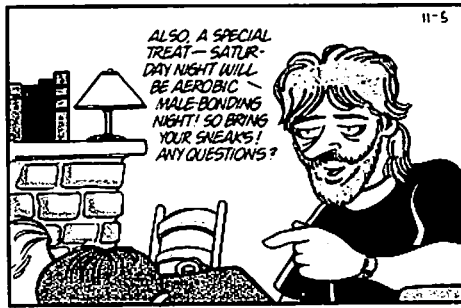
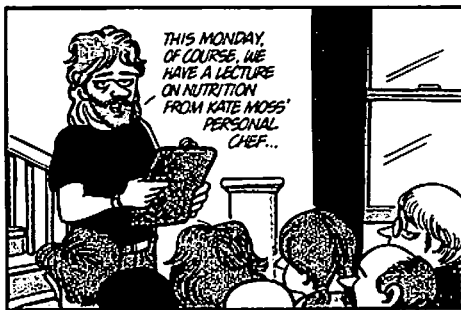
For a New Jerusalem (of the first order!)

Alan Thomsen  
San Francisco

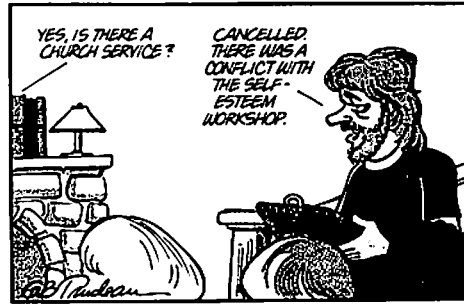
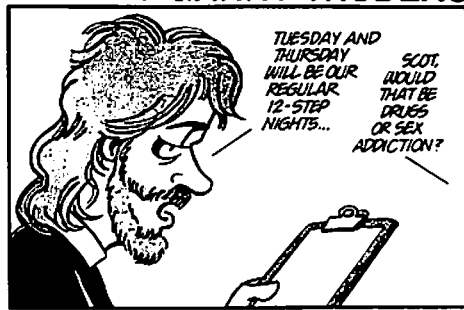
## DOONESBURY



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## BY GARRY TRUDEAU



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# Thoughts On Water

Water is very ambitious yet still quite humble:

Ever pursuing its goal,  
it is completely flexible  
in responding to obstacles.

It will go over, under or through.

But if it is blocked  
it goes around, or simply waits,  
gathering until there is enough to pass over.

In time, all obstacles are overcome.

Water, clinging to the earth, too long in one place,  
becomes stale and stagnant;

In trying to reach heaven, it is lifted up  
and becomes a cloud.

Sunlight on water is always a joy,

be it sparkling on a lake  
or dancing on a stream;

Even a muddy puddle will show a twinkle,  
and a dark cloud, a silver lining.

Learn from water: Be less dense,  
not so heavy, more transparent;

Responsive to the winds,  
willing to be lifted up and transformed.

The light of God shining through you  
is always beautiful.

Even on your darkest days,  
you may be making rainbows  
seen by someone else in a different place.

—Ken Turley  
Portland, Maine

## Life



They say life is full of ups and downs,  
the blossoming spring,  
the sad swan song,  
balmy days and stormy nights,  
height of joy, depth of plight,  
lowly paupers against mighty knights.  
The vanquished vanish,  
the victors stand tall,  
as curtains rise  
and curtains fall.  
Such is the age-old tale of life,  
none can escape,  
try as one might.  
Still, we can chart our winding course,  
and follow the Star we call North,  
through the waters rough and deep,  
onward, forward we toil and seek.  
When the last battle cry dies,  
peace will reign,  
today's heartbreak,  
tomorrow's serene.  
Go! Bear that cross to the highlands,  
rise from ashes  
across the seas and sands;  
the earth trembles and heavens roar,  
leave your footprints and let spirits soar.

—Raymond Wong  
San Francisco

*Reprinted from the Swedenborgian church newsletter, December 1991.*

# Golden Nuggets from '95

## Bed and Breakfast

Lucretia Winslow Green, an isolated member of the Philadelphia church living in Southbluff, Nebraska, sent a donation to *The Messenger* along with a delightful letter suggesting a bed and breakfast network for Swedenborgian travelers, with the fee or charge to go to some Swedenborgian cause. The traveler would contact the listed Swedenborgian host in the area he or she expects to visit to discuss convenient dates and arrival time, length of stay, etc. Ms. Green says, "the idea may be absurd, yet Swedenborgian isolates like me would love to *talk* about the writings rather than read, read, read! I am 40 miles from the Wyoming line but know of no New Church people in Cheyenne." She says if the program were to take shape with details carefully worked out, she would be glad to participate.

Editor's Note: *Does this sound like an interesting idea? I think it has definite possibilities!*

## Keep *The Messenger* Coming

A warm greeting from the Rev. Claud Presland in England, ordained in 1941, who writes: "... *The Messenger*—I love it and look forward to its arrival. It takes me a long time to read, but it is a joy. Please keep me on your mailing list and know you help me keep in touch." Mr. Presland has happy memories of attending the annual convention in the U.S. in 1956, as a representative of the British Conference.

## More Memories

Elaine Lowe writes: "I am a past member of the New York City church and the Orange, New Jersey church. My mother, Adelina Nunez Baker wrote many articles for *The Messenger* over 40 years ago—I don't know if anyone is still alive who will remember her. I have fond memories, as a young girl, of the wonderful Dr. Wilde ... and of course, in New Jersey, Harold Larsen was one of our favorites. Also as a child, I attended our camp in Maine, on the Saco River.

## Passages

### Baptisms

**Amatruda**—Camden Paul, son of Paul and Anita Amatruda, was baptized into the Christian faith September 24, 1995, at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

**Langley**—Katarina Rachelle Langley, daughter of Ken and Phyllis Langley, granddaughter of Bev and Dick Zacharias, was baptized into the Christian faith September 3, 1995, in Wichita, Kansas, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

**Mactavish**—Bobbie Mactavish, son of Bob and Christine Mactavish, was baptized into the Christian faith October 8, 1995 at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

**Robinson, Williams**—Geoffrey Alan Robinson, son of Debra and Steven Robinson, and Holly Lynn Williams, daughter of Denise and Robert Williams, were baptized into the Christian faith October 22, 1995, at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating.

**Wilson**—Zachary Chance Wilson, son of Randy and Anita Wilson, was baptized into the Christian faith August 20, 1995, at the Pawnee Rock, Kansas, Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

### Death

**Kiesman**—Muriel N. Kiesman, age 89, longtime member of the Fryeburg New Church, entered the spiritual world November 18, 1995, in Fryeburg, Maine. A graveside service was conducted November 22, 1995, the Rev. Robert Bossdorf officiating.

My husband and I are retired. We have discovered many of Swedenborg's thoughts and writings in present-day religions. It's a great study and also we admire Unity and Norman Vincent Peale—*The Power of Positive Thinking*. These three are the basis of my beliefs! I must say, I am very happy and content—taking one day at a time, having faith, and believing in miracles."

### Helen Keller

Ray Silverman writes, "I just wanted to thank you for your beautiful review of *Light in my Darkness* (April 1995 *Messenger*). ... My prayer has been that Helen's words reach the hearts of many people, and that her words will help prepare the way for a bright new era in which the real New Church will arise and shine ... may we all gather inspiration from Helen's life, and share this inspiration with others. . ."

## Boston Church Celebrates 150 Years

The Boston church held its 150-year celebration June 11, 1995. The church has been located at its present site on Beacon Hill since June 11, 1845. Over 50 leaders of many world religions attended the special interreligious service, with the church filled to capacity. Following the service, the congregation and religious leaders were invited to a buffet, which allowed representative peoples of widely variant religions to also mingle socially. National and international recognition of the Boston church's historic accomplishments was expressed by citations and letters as well as personal attendance.



Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death.

This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

# Swedenborg Foundation Library Opens

After a year of sorting, organizing, and cataloging by their staff, the Swedenborg Foundation library officially opened on September 27, 1995, with a preview of its collections to area librarians. Attending the reception were representatives from the board of directors, the American Philosophical Society Library, Bryn Mawr College, the Chester County Library, the Hagley Museum and Library, Villanova University, Lutheran Theological Seminary, West Chester University, and the Swedenborg Library at Bryn Athyn.

The library was created in 1874 with the donation of several volumes of rare Swedenborgian books to the Foundation by a private collector. Today the library consists of more than 2,000 books and pamphlets in three sections: the main collection, the circulating collection, and the rare book collection. A fourth resource, the Swedenborg Image Archive, contains more than 1,500 photographs and fine art reproductions.

In addition to serving the publishing needs of the Foundation, the library is open to scholars and the general public interested in the works of Swedenborg of his influence on others. Gems of the collection include publications of the Swedenborg Foundation from 1852 to the present, first editions, photolithographic reproductions of Swedenborg's manuscripts, and a select number of church periodicals.

The library is open by appointment only, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for major national holidays. For

those who find it inconvenient to use the library in person, a limited number of titles may be borrowed through the mail. These titles include all volumes of the Foundation's Standard Edition of Swedenborg's theological works and other Foundation publications that are currently in print.

The library also accepts donations of books to help complete and maintain the main and rare book collections. Of particular interest are materials that illustrate Swedenborg's influence on art, literature, psychology, and religion. The following short list of titles would be welcome additions: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men* (Boston, 1877); Jayne Hayward and Walter Calin, *Radiance and Reflection: Medieval Art from the Raymond Pitcairn Collection* (New York, 1982); Timothy Miller, *America's Alternative Religions* (Albany, NY, 1995); Joel Porte, *Representative Man: Ralph Waldo Emerson in His Time* (New York, 1978); Frank Sewall, *Swedenborg and Modern Idealism: A retrospect of Philosophy from Kant to the Present Time* (London, 1902); Colin Wilson, *Religion and the Rebel* (Greenwood Press, 1972).

For more information about the library, the availability of books via mail, donating books, or reference services, contact: Elizabeth Pitt, Librarian, Swedenborg Foundation, 320 North Church Street, West Chester, PA 19380. (610) 430-3222

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